

amused himself by the hour, perhaps quite forgetting his story, immersed in his creation as if it were something he actually remembered. » On other pages were notes of various kinds. I recollect two particularly — 'twenty pages of description of such a thing, twelve pages of description of such a scene, to be divided into three parts.<sup>5</sup> One could divine that Zola had the description in his head, formulated before it was set on paper; that he could hear it resounding rhythmically within him, like music •which only lacked words. This system of working with the compasses, as it were, even at things of the imagination, is not so rare as some may imagine. Zola, for his part, is a great mechanic. One can see how his descriptions proceed, symmetrically, spaced out, separated at times by some padding to give the reader breathing time, and divided into almost equal sections, like that of the flowers of the Paradou in ' La Faute de FAbbe Mouret/ that of the thunder storm in ' Une Page d'Amour,' and that of the death of Coupeau in \* L'Assommoir.' One might say that for his mind to work at ease it is necessary Zola should first trace the precise limits of his work, know exactly at what points he may rest, and what will be the extent and aspect of his work when printed. "When his materials are too large he cuts them down in order to get them within those limits; when they are small he makes an effort to spin them out to the allotted point. He has an unconquerable passion for due proportions which may occasionally tend to prolixity, but which frequently, by compelling his mind to dwell on his subject, renders his work

deeper, more complete."

Zola's books were written on small, unruled quarto paper, almost invariably of a very stout quality and highly glazed. Though his handwriting was large and bold he did not use a quill like Hugo and others, but the French, equivalent of the J pen, and for some thirty years he invariably employed the same thick ivory holder, so heavy a one that the present